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# MINORITY REPORT.

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If the Administration had a human rights policy, it would be about to come under severe strain. At the end of the month, Kim Dae Jung, the leader of the democratic opposition in South Korea who has lived in exile in the United States since 1982, will follow the example of his friend Benigno Aquino and go home. The mere mention of his name provokes a strange twin reaction—rage and fear in the case of the South Korean military hierarchy and an affected indifference and boredom on the part of the U.S. State Department. Kim is passé, say the languid bureaucrats in Washington. He is yesterday's man, irrelevant to the exciting new South Korea being forged by Gen. Chun Doo Hwan. His fate, says the U.S. government, is South Korea's "internal affair."

The South Korean dictatorship knows better. It knows that Kim Dae Jung poses a tremendous threat to its rule and that he could be the catalyst for a movement of democratic renewal. It also knows that the Reagan Administration is by no means neutral or indifferent. On the contrary, it is fully committed to the maintenance of oligarchical rule. The South Korean Army is, ultimately, under American command. American troops are entrenched on the peninsula, with nuclear weapons at the ready. When General Chun seized power in 1980, a South Korean front-line battalion was diverted from the northern border to help secure the dictatorship and put down civilian dissent. That atrocious decision, which weakened the very border defense of which conservatives make such a fetish, was taken with the permission of Gen. John A. Wickham Jr., the U.S. Commander in South Korea. So there is no point in pretending that Kim's political future is no concern of the United States.

Nor is there any sense in pretending not to know what risks he is running by going home. On September 12, John Hughes, a State Department spokesman, said: "We fully recognize this is a matter for the Korean government to handle. . . . I do not know what his legal status is under Korean law." Nonsense. It is well known to the American government that Kim faces seventeen and a half years of a prison sentence. This sentence is the residue of a death sentence which was imposed by a grotesque military court and then commuted, in 1981. It is equally well known that the South Korean authorities have made several spirited attempts to murder him. In 1971, after he received 46 percent of the vote in a presidential election which was blatantly rigged (and which was the last to feature more than one candidate), Kim was severely injured in an automobile collision arranged by the Korean Central Intelligence Agency. In August 1973 he was kidnapped by the same agency during a visit to Japan and narrowly escaped assassination. From that date to this, with the exception of a brief interregnum between the Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan dictatorships, in 1980, he has been in prison, house arrest or exile. Those in Washington who have trained the K.C.I.A. and who arm and command its military masters are in no position to

is an impressive man; single-minded about democracy and strikingly calm about the risky prospect of his return. He retains an unironic faith in the democratic principles of the United States, even though General Chun's coup took place with only a squeak from Jimmy Carter, and even though the despotic system continues with less than a squeak from Ronald Reagan. He still refuses to criticize the United States in public, though he is "disappointed" at his failure to persuade Washington of the need for a democratic South Korea. I asked him why he thought the Administration was so insouciant, and he looked bewildered for a moment. But it's clear that he is going home because he has lost hope in a change of policy here.

Possibly there is some "quiet diplomacy" going on. South Korea is scheduled to host the summer Olympic Games in 1988, and a blood-spattered tarmac scene à la Marcos would not be the ideal curtain raiser. On its good days, the Reagan Administration desires a quiet life, and it doesn't especially need another outrage from its Pacific clients. But the South Korean right is an old hand at the quiet diplomacy game. It doesn't have to persuade America to send troops to support it because it already has them. It also has a coterie of rich and active supporters among the Reaganites, many of them on the payroll of that disgusting fanatic Sun Myung Moon [see "Minority Report," January 22, 1983]. And it can claim to be a "front-line state" against communism—against, in fact, the world's most regimented and religious Stalinist system.

But quiet diplomacy, as usual, has translated into collaboration with dictatorship. Elliott Abrams, the man who holds the undemanding job of Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, has said it is the North Koreans who wish to kill Kim, not the Chun regime. This echoes the pathetic attempt by the Marcos regime to blame the Philippine Communist Party for the murder of Aquino. It also, disgracefully, supplies the South Korean death squads with an alibi in advance.

We have come to expect no better from Abrams, but what an insult he is hurling, in our name, at a brave man. As it happens, Kim Dae Jung is a staunch anticommunist, a devout Roman Catholic and a believer in what he touchingly calls free enterprise. In a sane world, he would be my respected political opponent—a decent Christian Democrat. In the zombie world of Jeane Kirkpatrick and Elliott Abrams, I have to count myself his ally. In the case of South Korea the conservatives and their sidekicks have proven once again that they prefer not authoritarianism or totalitarianism but authoritarianism to democracy.

The presumption of Edwin Meese 3d knows no limit. First, by his sleazy attitude to money and "connections," puts us all to the trouble of appointing a special prosecutor. Now, he is asking the court to reimburse him for \$700,000 legal fees he paid as a result. Where did all the money